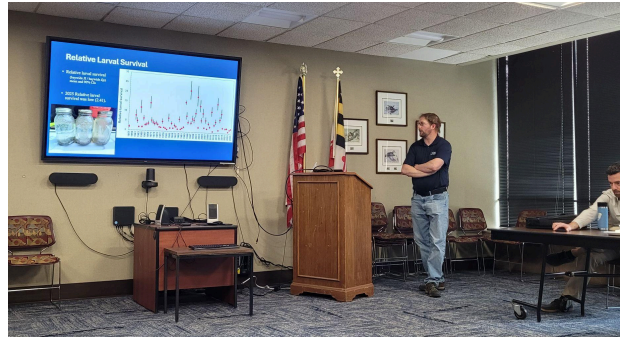


## Fisheries Ecosystem Assessment Division November 2025

### *Last Month*

**Larval Striped Bass Feeding Study** - Work continues on processing Striped Bass and White Perch larvae collected from the spring Midwater Trawls. Of the 53 total samples and subsamples, 23 have been completed, and all but 10 are currently in progress. Just under 10,000 *Morone* larvae have been processed, with 1,331 Striped Bass and 5,240 White Perch. The remainder were outside our size ranges for feeding analysis and not identified to species.



An ambitious White Perch larva has a mouthful of copepod; Jeff Horne presents at Striped Bass Recruitment meeting.

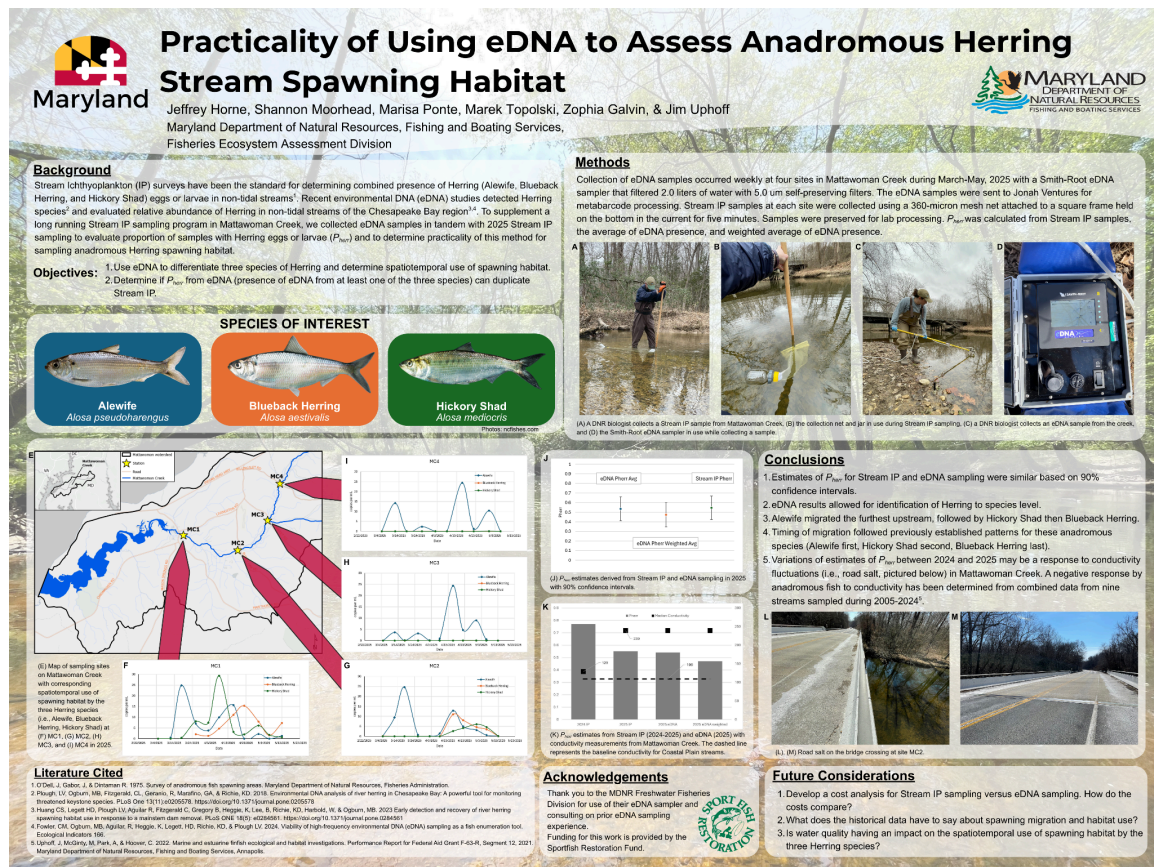
**Stomach Content Analysis for Striped Bass** – Staff worked with Cooperative Oxford Laboratory (COL) to collect Striped Bass stomachs for forage analysis. Striped Bass were caught via hook and line and brought back to COL. Staff cut open stomachs to determine forage eaten by these fish. In November, the stomach contents of 135 Striped Bass were examined. Most prey items were Atlantic Menhaden and Blue Crabs. Unusually, seven fish had remains of Mantis Shrimp (*Squilla empusa*) in their stomachs, which have been previously recorded on only six occasions in the 13 year time series.

**Striped Bass Recruitment Meeting** - Staff attended a meeting with Striped Bass program biologists and FABS leadership to discuss results and observations from the 2025 season, as well as plan for the 2026 season. Jeff Horne presented data from the 2025 spring Striped Bass egg and larval work (pictured above) and Tred Avon River summer sampling.

**Menhaden-Striped Bass Traffic Light Index** - Staff worked with DNR communications staff on a press release.

**Federal Aid Report** – Staff began data analysis for the 2025 Federal Aid Report.

**Maryland Water Monitoring Council Annual Conference (MWMC)** – Staff attended the 31<sup>st</sup> annual conference for MWMC, and presented a poster titled “Practicality of Using eDNA to Assess Anadromous Herring Stream Spawning Habitat” (pictured below).



## Webinars, Meetings, etc.

Staff participated in an internal FABS meeting on planning for climate and environmental change.

Staff listened in on ASMFC Striped Bass and Menhaden meetings.

Staff participated in an American Fisheries Society “higher-level thinking” webinar, where they learned strategies for employing critical thinking techniques in fisheries management scenarios.

Staff attended the DNR invasive species matrix team (ISMT) meeting.

Staff met with DNR and MDE environmental review staff about a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for review of proposed projects or activities that may impact anadromous fish spawning habitat and require time of year restrictions. The MOU would also provide a

trigger for passing projects on to DNR for review early in the process when changes should be easier to make. Follow-up meetings were held within FEAD and with DNR's environmental review staff to identify the triggers for non-tidal and tidal waters.

### *Looking Forward*

Staff will continue to work with Cooperative Oxford Lab to examine stomach contents of adult Striped Bass.

Staff will continue data analysis for the 2025 Federal Aid Report.

Staff will continue examining gut contents of larval Striped Bass and White Perch.

Seasonal Zophia Galvan's contract concludes on December 2.